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CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

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September 23, 2005

To: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: David E. Janssen
Chief Administrative Officer

**HURRICANE KATRINA TASK FORCE PLAN OF ACTION FOR PUBLIC SERVICES
AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION (Syn. #65-A)**

On September 6, 2005, on a motion from Supervisor Burke, your Board directed the Chief Administrative Office (CAO) to convene a task force, comprised of County departments and other agencies, to develop guidelines and a process to provide expedited public services to qualified, displaced families relocating temporarily or permanently to Los Angeles County as a result of Hurricane Katrina. The process should include anti-fraud measures; private sector involvement; and an information dissemination plan using Call 211 and the County's website.

During your September 13, 2005 Board meeting, several members of the Hurricane Katrina Evacuees' Task Force gave interim oral reports to your Board.

The following report describes actions taken in response to your Board's direction.

HURRICANE KATRINA EVACUEES' TASK FORCE

Background

On Saturday, September 3, 2005, the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) called the administrator for the CAO Office of Emergency Management to ask how many Hurricane Katrina evacuees Los Angeles County could accept on an urgency basis if the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) decided it would be necessary to relocate them from Houston and surrounding areas. State OES indicated that, in all likelihood, if FEMA relocated evacuees to Los Angeles County, it would be on a permanent basis. OEM subsequently contacted the Chief Administrative Officer, Board Offices, key County departments, the City of Los Angeles, and the Los Angeles

Chapter of the American Red Cross (ARC) so that the figure given to State OES would be well-considered. The goal was to establish a single, coordinated number that could be reported to OES with confidence, knowing that all involved departments and agencies would be able to fulfill their respective missions to provide mass care and shelter, public services, and assistance with longer-term housing. The need for multi-agency evacuee planning fit well with Supervisor Burke's motion to form a task force which had been shared with OEM on September 2, 2005. To achieve short-term planning goals, OEM contacted departments and agencies over the holiday weekend. The first meeting of the Hurricane Katrina Evacuees' Task Force was held via conference call on Monday, September 5, 2005. A list of participating agencies is attached. To ensure well-coordinated plans, OEM facilitated the Task Force meetings, with Supervisor Molina's Office and the Los Angeles City Mayor's Office serving as co-chairs.

Given the short notice and the projected need for shelter and essential human services, the Task Force ultimately jointly agreed that the County Operational Area would be able to accept 1,000 evacuees. In addition to the "formal" FEMA evacuees, the group recognized that a number of disaster victims would independently relocate to Los Angeles County. Consequently, County and City departments also immediately began to plan for the short- and mid-term human service needs of the independent, spontaneous evacuees.

TASK FORCE ACTIONS

- The Community Development Commission took the lead in identifying shelter locations that could potentially be used for an extended period of time. The Los Angeles Chapter of the ARC reviewed the sites and subsequently approved the list for use as ARC shelters.
- The City of Los Angeles coordinated with Airports and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to determine methods and capacities for moving evacuees from airports to various shelter locations.
- The Administrative Offices of the County (CAO Public Affairs) and City of Los Angeles coordinated the creation of "Welcome Packets" designed to provide evacuees with a wide range of important local information. These packets have been distributed to key County and City public service departments, the ARC, community-based organizations, and with other cities that may be contacted by evacuees in need of assistance.
- Supervisor Molina's office, the Office of the Mayor, and several other Board offices made outreach to local private industry (hotels, chambers of commerce, etc.) to determine if additional support might be available.
- The County Office of Education (COE) said they would coordinate with individual schools and assist with the school registration process based on the location of shelters within specific school districts. Students will self-register with the

appropriate school district. COE also provided school registration information in the Welcome Packets. In addition, COE will provide on-site education programs for students on an "as needed" basis until students are able to register with the appropriate school district and start attending class.

- The City of Los Angeles took the lead in developing a Reception Center plan to receive arriving evacuees. Plan development was a team effort by both County and City personnel. The response component includes representation from a wide range of City and County departments, as well as the American Red Cross, state agencies, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The plan is centered on the activation of a reception center in Westchester that will provide key public services in a "one-stop" environment. The County and City also established a joint activation policy and protocol. The Center will only be activated by joint concurrence between the Office of the Mayor and the Office of the Chair of the Board, based on the arrival of large numbers of FEMA evacuees in need of a centralized one-stop service center. The Center will not be a 24-hour operation; rather it will be open during normal business hours or based on need.
- Animal Care and Control is prepared to care for evacuees' pets, including sick and injured animals. With the exception of service animals, the ARC does not allow pets in shelters.
- The ARC will issue debit cards that range from \$360 for individuals to \$1,500 for a family of five. The ARC designed these cards to help evacuees with food and incidentals for a two-week period. The ARC can also offer hotel vouchers.

Department of Public Social Services

The Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) formed a multi-disciplinary team that can assess evacuees' needs for a variety of human services programs. DPSS has coordinated with Mental Health; Health Services' Emergency Medical Services and Public Health; Children and Family Services; and Community and Senior Services to ensure coordinated and comprehensive service delivery. Eligibility staff have been provided with instructions which clearly delineate the eligibility and documentation requirements for Katrina evacuees, including expedited processing procedures. Eligibility and documentation requirements vary by program. In general, applicants may sign affidavits when required documentation is not available. To expedite applications for Katrina evacuees:

- Cases are assigned to centralized/specialized Eligibility Workers who become experts in processing the Katrina applications, including making referrals for other needed services (Mental Health, Children's' Services, Health Services, etc.)
- Katrina applications are eligible for expedited processing by virtue of their circumstances and emergent need for benefits, assuming they meet the eligibility requirements.

- Evacuees are encouraged to register with the FEMA 1-800 Tele-registration number to ensure that they avail themselves of all applicable FEMA benefits.

Assistance is granted for a limited period of time (month of application plus three months) in order to give applicants time to gather needed documentation if ongoing assistance is needed. DPSS has incorporated the following anti-fraud measures to ensure only legitimate victims apply for Federal, State, or local services:

- DPSS, in conjunction with the Internal Services Department, has developed a web application for tracking information and services provided for each family/individual. The site will use social security numbers, FEMA numbers, and case numbers as controls.
- DPSS provided eligibility staff with information regarding hurricane-impacted cities. Staff will review the information to verify that the addresses provided by applicants are in the disaster-stricken areas.
- Fingerprint requirements continue to apply for CalWORKS and General Relief applications. Portable finger imaging equipment is available for applicants residing in shelters.

INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

The CAO's Public Affairs Office coordinated the update of two County websites, including the Office of Emergency Management's Operational Area website, with information and referrals for evacuees and those wishing to donate money, goods, or services.

The Call 2-1-1 program quickly geared up to handle a large number of phone calls from evacuees; volunteers; agencies and individuals wishing to make donations; and others. Specifically, 2-1-1 is acting as a clearing house able to refer evacuees and other callers to a wide range of public, volunteer, and non-profit services. To ensure the broadest possible use of the Call 2-1-1 system:

- The CAO Public Affairs office developed Welcome Packets with Call 211 information which were distributed to all 88 cities, COE, and the ARC.
- The OEM distributed Call 2-1-1 information via the Disaster Management Area Coordinators to all 88 cities. They also distributed the information to all registered *Emergency Management Information System* (EMIS) users via the EMIS e-mail notification system, and to all registered users representing cities, County departments and key contacts via the County's automated notification system, the *Communicator*.

In response to an amendment to the original Board motion, on September 12, 2005, your Board received an independent report from Dr. David Sanders, Director of the Department of Children and Family Services, advising that the department has been successful in locating all children under County purview that were placed with relatives/foster parents/adoptive parents residing in the Gulf Coast area.

CURRENT STATUS

The Office of Emergency Management continues to participate in regular conference calls with State OES regarding the status of evacuees. Approximately one week after learning that the County might receive Katrina evacuees on an urgency basis, we were notified that FEMA had put a moratorium on the airlifts in order to assess their plans. We were advised to continue with our planning process; however, we understood that the situation was fluid. The County is currently on notice that we could potentially receive Katrina evacuees that may have to be relocated out of the Houston area because of Hurricane Rita.

Thanks to the efforts of the Task Force, the County Operational Area is ready to welcome and shelter evacuees that may be relocated as a result of either Hurricane Katrina or Hurricane Rita. Planning subgroups continue to meet and the full Task Force continues to hold periodic conference calls to discuss relevant issues.

We will keep your Board informed of significant changes when they occur.

DEJ:CP
KG:cm

Attachment

c: County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Emergency Management Council
Hurricane Katrina Task Force
Emergency Management Council Steering Committee
Emergency Management Council Subcommittee
Each Board Emergency Preparedness Deputy